

Learning and Support Teacher Conference

Focus on Autism: Whole School Practices

Learning objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify effective whole school supports to meet the needs of students with an ASD
- prioritise strategies/adjustments that could be applied in their school to improve educational outcomes for students with an ASD

A whole school approach to support diverse learners

This session introduces a framework for examining a whole school approach to support diverse learners under the dimensions of:

- school culture, values, beliefs and leadership
- school policies, practices and systems

Supporting all learners

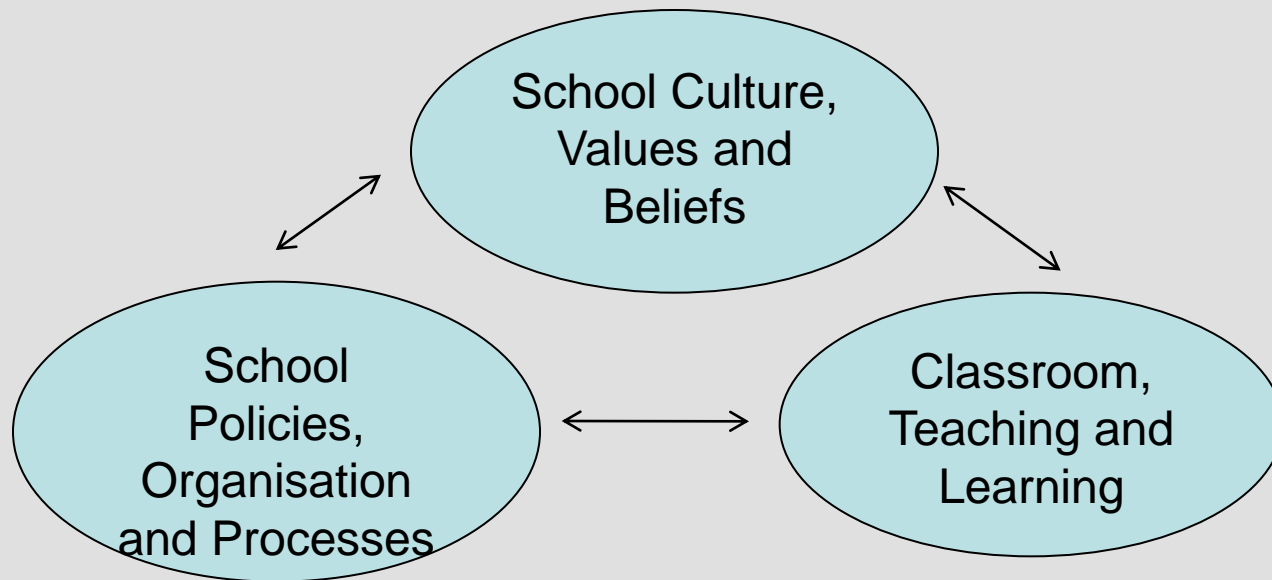
For some people school is like fitting a square peg in a round hole. For me at the moment the hole (school) has changed its shape slightly to accommodate me and the square peg (me) has tried to soften its edges.

So a better description would be a rounded square trying to fit itself into a circle with sticky out bits.

(Jackson, 2002, p.134)

School policies, practices and systems

Key features of a school community which fosters high achievement for all students



(Booth & Ainscow, 2002)

Accommodation: autism and schools

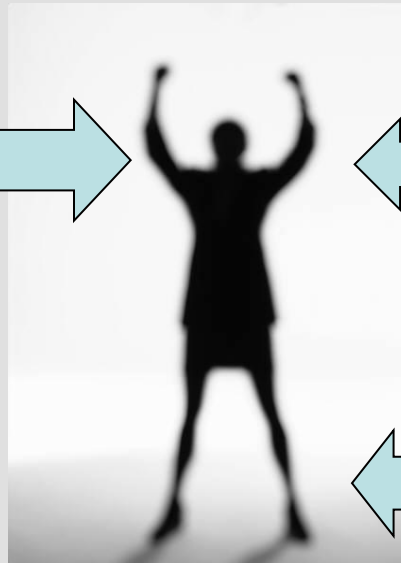
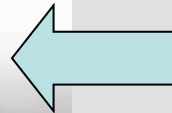
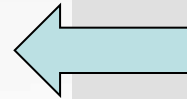
- **Autism Triad: Individual Plan**

communication

Sensory
motor

social

Repetitive behaviour
restricted interest



- **Autism friendly school**

- communication & learning support (visuals)

- social support and adaptation; adults & peers

- management of sound, light and touch, taste and texture issues

- provide structure & routine

**SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL
PLACEMENT**

What are the key indicators of good practice specific to students with an ASD?

- Add these indicators to the previous activity sheet

School culture, values, beliefs and leadership

- Sound leadership and a positive school climate are well documented as critical to successful outcomes for **all** students.
- School **leaders are the philosophical backbone** of an inclusive school.
- Significant and sustainable changes in teacher behaviour and student outcomes are possible when school leaders **empower** and **build capacity** of educators.

What has research identified?

According to Ainscow (1995), critical factors demonstrated by effective leadership in education include:

- the provision of professional learning opportunities and opportunities for staff to engage in collaborative problem solving
- the building of capacity and professional growth of all school staff

Shaddock et al (2007)

According to Senge (1998), critical factors on the journey of cultural change in large organisations include:

- training as learning
- patience and perseverance
- the emotional ability of leaders to see setbacks as opportunities for 'correction', not failure.

Senge et al (1998)

School culture, values, beliefs and leadership (continued)

- **What does leadership look like?**
- **Who can lead?**

School culture, values, beliefs and leadership (continued)

1. Effective change starts at the top.	TRUE	FALSE
2. Leaders act and employees need to follow to make change happen.	TRUE	FALSE
3. Employees are naturally resistant to change.	TRUE	FALSE
4. Effective change can start anywhere in the organisation.	TRUE	FALSE
5. People will want to change if they understand the reasons for the change.	TRUE	FALSE
6. It is important to integrate the present context into any change.	TRUE	FALSE
7. Understanding a person's belief system has little to do with change.	TRUE	FALSE
8. You don't need a clear picture of the change. You just need to start changing.	TRUE	FALSE
9. Change is not a natural part of life.	TRUE	FALSE

Reading: Calbrese, R. L. (2002). *The Leadership Assignment : Creating Change.* Allyn & Bacon, Pg 1-20.

School culture, values, beliefs and leadership (continued)

Jones (1999)

Questions to ask about leadership and influence include:

- what are the main choices I can make?
- what are my major constraints?
- overall, what actual and potential power and influence do I have?

Jones, A., & May, J. (1999). In Working your Organisation: Leadership from Below. A.J. (Tony) Shaddock, Pg 4.

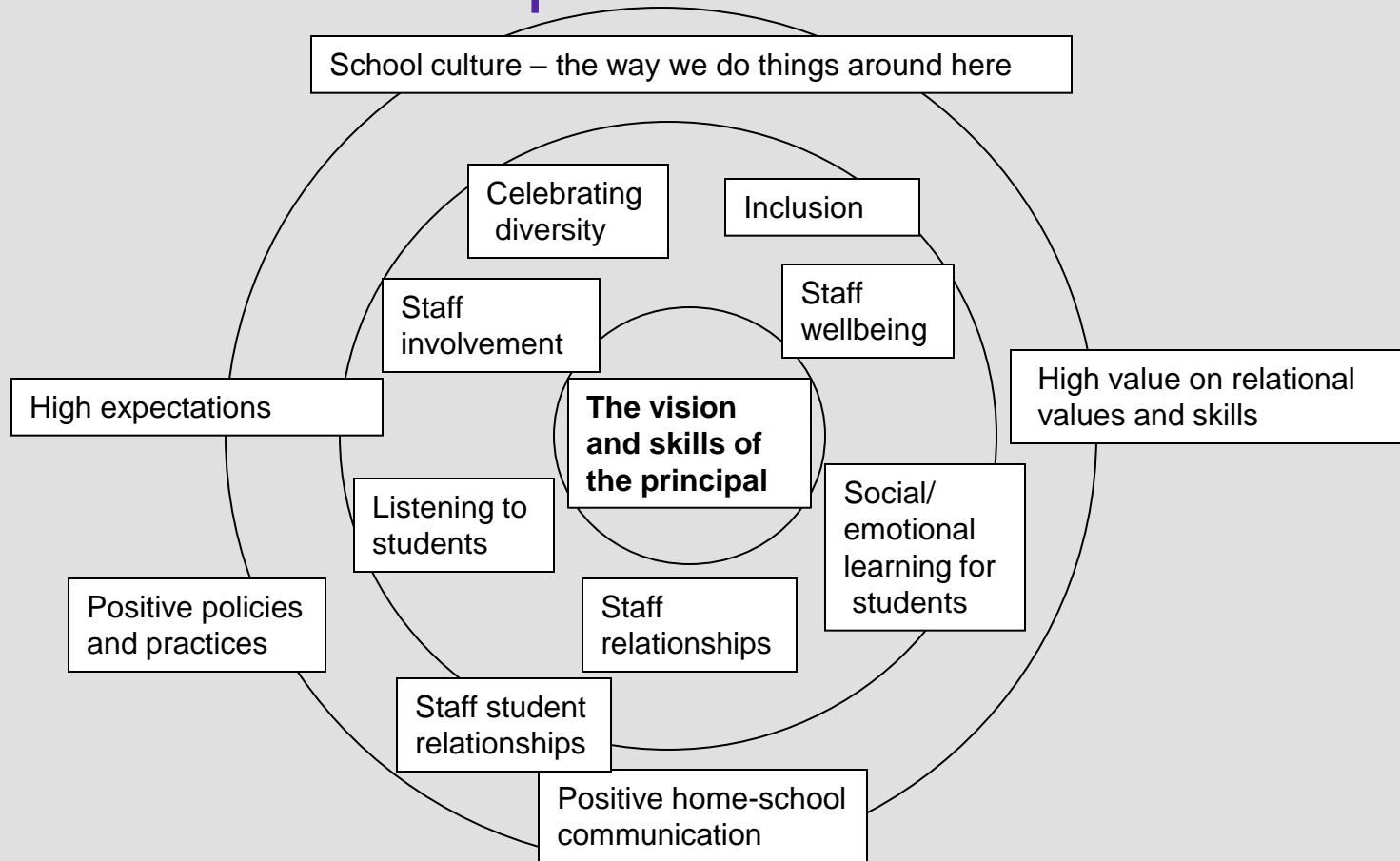
School culture, values, beliefs and leadership (continued)

Coates (1994) lists the common sources of power in organisations as:

- role power
- expert power
- personal power or charisma
- reward or sanction power
- information power
- network power
- physical power

Reading: Coates, J. (1994) *In Working your Organisation: Leadership from Below* . A.J. (Tony) Shaddock, Pg 4.

School culture, values, beliefs and leadership



Reading: Roffey, S. (2007). Leading & Managing, 13 (1), pp. 16-30

School culture, values, beliefs and leadership (continued)

The challenge of diversity

‘an effective school is one which provides a comprehensive curriculum to all students, ensuring both quality and equity. A school can be described as effective only when every child is being educated successfully in it’

Spedding (1996) Cited in NSW DET. (1999) *Learning Together: Fostering a sense of community – A discussion paper for school communities.*

School culture, values, beliefs and leadership (continued)

‘Inclusive school culture is one nurtured by constant development of staff capacity to include students, collaborate with other professionals and work in partnership with parents. Such a positive culture also fosters team planning, collaborative teaching, cooperative learning and transition planning for students as they progress through their schooling.’

Students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms: A resource for teachers

<http://www.disabilitycoordinationoffice.com.au/content/view/868/379>

Retrieved 9th Sept 2008

What are the challenges?

- Otherwise skilled and competent educators often report that they consider themselves to be less than fully capable of meeting the needs of students with autism because of the baffling nature of the characteristics of the disorder.

(Spears, Tollefson & Simpson, 2001).

What are the key indicators of good practice specific to students with an ASD?

In the context of the last discussion and your prior learning, your experience as a teacher, leader and member of a school community, consider the following...

- What happens at your school ?
- What can you change?
- Complete the following self assessment tool and identify 3 priorities for your school to focus on

School policies, practices and systems - 'self assessment'

Features	Not in place	Partially in place	Fully in place	Priority for planning 1-3
SCHOOL STRUCTURES & SYSTEMS				
Staff have knowledge and understanding about ASD and the implications on learning and behaviour				
A learning support team is involved in developing a personalised learning plan				
Families are involved in a collaborative planning process				
A multi disciplinary team is available / accessed				
Whole school adjustments are planned for and provided eg -playground supports -timetable flexibility -concessions re uniform are made -specific 'time out' area is identified -staff / adult mentor is identified -other students are provided information to develop awareness and understanding about ASD (e.g. Sixth Sense) -social supports e.g. peer supports, strategies to manage bullying, social skills groups				
Positive approach to behaviour is used e.g -preventive strategies are in place -functional assessment of behaviour -focus on skill building -flexibility of school discipline/ welfare policy				
Students have an individualised plan/ personalised plan that addresses the specific learning needs of students with ASD (communication, social, sensory, behavioural)				
CLASSROOM ADJUSTMENTS/SUPPORTS- Classroom supports & adjustments are planned for and provided eg				
- structure, routine, predictability -visual supports e.g. schedules, topic boards, written instructions, define steps within a task, enhance attention in group activities, foster active involvement -sensory supports eg. movement breaks, seating, lighting -social supports – e.g. peers supports, social scripts, a focus on incidental teaching of social skills -homework support -positive behavioral strategies are used -use of AAC support to enhance communication and expressive language -use of AAC to support understanding of language and behaviour -use of AAC to enhance expression of emotion/ emotional regulation -adjustments to task complexity -adjustments to assessment tasks				

Thank you for your participation!

- Evaluation forms